

Question/Comments and Answers

Summary

Three topics generated the majority of feedback in the Phase II scenarios: (1) SDF integration with tax and billing systems, (2) the tax and billing to CAMA integration including auditor's values and bucket allocations, and (3) the tax and billing to CAMA integration including homestead information.

First, the Department removed the SDF to tax and billing integration scenarios. County practices vary significantly in the way SDF data entry occurs, which made integrating data to create efficiencies too difficult to implement. The fact remains that data entry from the SDF is made in some counties up to four times. Therefore, although the Phase II scenarios will not include an integration of data from SDF to the tax and billing system, the Department still encourages counties and vendors to work toward finding efficiencies in the processing. The scenarios still require SDF to CAMA integration, which should resolve the largest burden on counties.

Second, the Department has received comments on the integration of values, bucket allocations and homestead status from tax and billing to CAMA and has taken these comments under advisement. Upon further consideration, the Department believes these requirements are needed. These requirements are in no way designed to disrupt the operations or responsibilities of the county offices; rather, these software requirements will occur behind the scene and involve little change in office responsibility. The tax and bill system will automatically generate the integration files. The CAMA system will automatically store the changes. The tax and billing to CAMA integration tests may necessitate additional programming work on the part of vendors, but the end users in the county offices will be able to access more real-time, integrated data.

Historically, one of the most problematic issues with data compliance is the timing differences between the submission of assessor's files and auditor's files. Specifically, the majority of changes to gross assessed values in the current tax year are not made in the assessment system for values in the current tax year. Requiring the tax and billing to CAMA integration to also include changes to gross assessed values will enable the CAMA system to run reports outlining value differences at any given point in time. Additionally, looking ahead, the Department could amend the file formats in the PARCEL file to include the data that these integration testing scenarios are examining. Assessing officials should note that auditor's values and allocations from the tax and billing system are for informational-purposes only and should not overwrite postings in the CAMA system; rather, the values and allocations from the tax and billing system are only required to be stored and displayed as a separate field. Furthermore, with the constitutional property tax caps, the assessed value allocations have become an area where assessors and auditors need further coordination. Allocation of assessed values is a responsibility that does not fall entirely to one office. Increasing the coordination between the assessment and tax and billing systems in allowing the current values to integrate further will help officials in both the assessor's office and auditor's office identify potential discrepancies in values and allocations.

Third, in the Phase I scenarios under both 50 IAC 23 and 50 IAC 26, the CAMA system is required to have an indicator that signifies whether a homestead is filed on the property. Particularly, in 50 IAC 26 Phase I testing, CAMA vendors are required to demonstrate that their systems include a homestead indicator for eligible records and ensure that those records include a portion of their AV under the 1% tax cap allocation. Including the homestead status in the integration will enable the CAMA system to accurately include this field with no additional data entry work from the assessor.

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

From

L.L. Low Associates

It appears that the terms 'Tax Management System' and 'Tax & Billing System' are being used interchangeably in the scenarios. Our understanding is the 'Tax Management System' is made up of the 'CAMA/Sales Disclosure System' and the 'Tax & Billing System'.

Answer:

This is correct; these two terms are distinct. The tax and billing system represents one module of the overall Property Tax Management System. The Department has reviewed the Phase II testing scenarios and corrected the document for any inconsistencies in the usage of these terms. Any revisions are reflected in the finalized version of the Phase II testing scenarios, which is posted to the Phase II Vendor Certification webpage.

Question/Comment:

From

L.L. Low Associates

When considering creating new, or making changes to existing file formats/structures we think it is important for the DLGF to consult with the vendors to determine what their required fields/information needs are. True, some of the vendor's required fields may hold no relevance to the DLGF's data gathering and processing, but they are vital to how our systems operate and directly relate to the programming that is in place to comply with past and future certification of these systems. Example: 'MOBILE' and 'PERSPROP' files that require a 'Supplemental file' defined and agreed to by vendors so we could comply with certification integration requirements. Real Estate also uses a vendor defined and agreed upon file format for Tax-to CAMA processing so we could comply with those certification integration requirements.

Answer:

The Department is in agreement that when amending file formats in 50 IAC 26, input from vendors is very valuable. As such, before formally initiating proposed changes to the file formats for OILGAS and OILGASALL last fall, the Department consulted with all the oil and gas vendors to seek their input on the proposed changes. Their input helped the Department formulate the proposed format changes to these two files. Additionally, another opportunity to provide input regarding the proposed changes was provided during the advertised public hearing. The Department will continue to seek input from vendors whenever it intends to make amendments to the file formats in 50 IAC 26 and encourages vendors to provide their ongoing feedback regarding concerns and/or suggestions on the file formats.

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

From

Thomson Reuters

In the CAMA to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, for Test 1(c), traditionally, the CAMA system has not been a source for the storage of net assessed values (NAV), later used for tax billing purposes. This value, calculated by the Tax and Billing system, is not finally determined until just before tax values are produced. This test requirement would then presume to have a subsequent and reciprocal export/import process (Tax -> CAMA) that is superfluous and not consistent with actual jurisdictional practices. CAMA systems are concerned only with Gross Assessed Values.

Answer:

In this scenario, CAMA vendors are asked to maintain gross assessed values as opposed to net assessed values. We understand that traditionally this was not done, but with the changes in the importance of property tax cap allocations the Department believes this is useful and is justified under 50 IAC 26-15-1.

Question/Comment:

From

Thomson Reuters

This question addresses CAMA to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area test 1(g), the Personal Property to Tax and Billing Interface Test 1(c), and In the Mobile to Tax and Billing Interface Test 1(f). Please provide further clarification on the practical application of these tests in a production environment. It is unclear as to whether or not the DLGF is expecting a software mechanism to be triggered; allowing a roll of certified gross assessed values once approval is provided. Or, does the DLGF envision that this would be a support intervention; requiring back office database modification? Furthermore, is this more explicitly applicable to the Tax and Billing component of the system?

Answer:

Similar to the procedure instituted under 50 IAC 23, the Department has requested that if a county chooses to re-roll values, that they receive approval from the Department to re-certify gross assessed values. Under 50 IAC 26, in this testing scenario, the Department is requiring that vendors on the tax and billing side do not allow the re-roll without approval, in a process controlled by the vendor.

Question/Comment:

From

Thomson Reuters

In the "Re-Roll" of Certified Gross Assessed Values Test Area, with authorization of a "re-roll", is there any further expectation on the part of the DLGF that the roll from the prior and now obsolete roll, should be retained? Based on the language in Test Areas 1 - 4, it would seem that this would in fact need to be a complete replacement of the "original roll". Otherwise, the count of value records applicable to a given year could become quite unmanageable.

Answer:

In the event of a Department-authorized "re-roll" of certified gross assessed values, the previous invalid values do not need to be retained.

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

In the Mobile to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area and Personal Property to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, the supplemental files for the MOBILE and PERSPROP files are not mentioned.

Answer:

Supplemental files contain fields that are outside the purview of those specified in 50 IAC 26-20. As such, the Department cannot require that data contained in the supplemental files be interfaced from the assessment system to the tax and billing system. The Department recognizes that tax and billing vendors may use additional information to fully demonstrate certification testing, namely in Phase I during the calculation of tax bills. The Department has provided supplemental files for both PERSPROP and MOBILE files as part of the 50 IAC 26 data bundle to help meet this objective. To the extent that data contained in the supplemental files may be helpful, tax and billing vendors may use these supplemental files.

From

L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comment:

In the Oil and Gas to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, this test requires use of OILGAS and OILGASALL files which we just received an updated version which still does not include all of our required fields. We currently have a single, programmed and working, vendor agreed upon format/structure which is still different from the new formats/structure. Will the currently in use file format/structure be acceptable for continued use as it still contains all the needed Tax & Billing System fields for interface?

Answer:

Oil and gas vendors will have to be able to import the data from the OILGAS and OILGASALL files provided in the data bundle, and in turn, will have to generate the OILGAS and OILGASALL files per the file specifications in 50 IAC 26-20 (using the recently amended version of the rule). Tax and billing vendors will have to show that they can take the data contained in the OILGAS and OILGASALL files and interface the data into their systems. The Department will leave the technical programming of the interfacing of the data to the discretion of the vendors. To the extent that the tax and billing vendor may need additional data from the oil and gas assessment system in order to demonstrate the Phase II tests, the vendor may use a supplemental file while conducting the interface. However, the Department cannot require that the oil and gas assessment system produce a supplemental file or that the tax and billing vendor import the data from said file.

From

L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comment:

In the Tax and Billing System Post Certification Lock Guidance Test Area, should it be presumed that any subsequent corrections in the Tax and Billing software would simply replace a prior correction as opposed to an ongoing series of separate value records?

Answer:

Per the requirements of 50 IAC 26-14-2 and 50 IAC 26-15-5, a separate posting must be created if there is an allowable change to a certified gross assessed value following the interface of the data from the assessment system to the tax and billing system. Original certified values must be maintained.

From

Thomson Reuters

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

At the start of the Integration section of the Phase II testing scenarios, what is expected when adding the deductions to a real property record as requested by the evaluator? Deductions are not transmitted to the assessor as they do not care or need them. To make such a data flow a new file format/structure and procedures would be required. In addition changing the process and data flow would cause undue confusion for the county personnel and accepted procedures.

Answer:

The test is not altering the procedures of deductions originating in the auditor's office; rather, the test is asking tax and billing vendors to apply a standard homestead deduction to a real property record and verify that upon integration of the information, the CAMA system imports the information. This test represents a continuation of what CAMA vendors are required to demonstrate in Phase I testing per the requirements of 50 IAC 26-13-5.

From

L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comment:

In the Sales Disclosure Data Integration to CAMA Software Test Area, for Tests 1-2, for the majority of XSoft (INCama) users; those that are using INCama's Sales Disclosure module, the module is already integrated with the CAMA system--it is all part of the same software and database. In a few instances, users are utilizing either a third party product (e.g., AS2) or are entering Sales Data directly onto the DLGF sales disclosure website. In the first case, there is nothing to integrate since it is by default already integrated. In the other cases, we have an import tool that allows users to import sales data from the three DLGF Sales Disclosure file formats (i.e., SalesDisc, SaleContac, SaleParcel). For purposes of this test, will AS2 (in addition to the DLGF) have to be present at testing and prepare such files in order to show how we import the sales data into INCama? It should also be known that if the files we are provided are not in the proper format or if there are data issues the files will not import.

Answer:

In order to be Phase II certified, all applicable combinations of assessment and tax and billing systems must demonstrate the functionality required. In other words, Xsoft's sale disclosure module would need to demonstrate that it can integrate its data with its CAMA module per the Phase II testing scenarios. Likewise, the same would apply to the integration between the State's Sales Disclosure system and Xsoft's CAMA module and between AS2's Sales Disclosure system and Xsoft's CAMA module. In terms of the files that will be used for Phase II testing, vendors will be using the Department-provided data bundle. Vendors have been given the opportunity to review the data bundle and provide their feedback, including issues with file format specifications. The Department has made a concerted effort to review the files contained in the data bundle - based on vendor feedback - and make any necessary corrections.

From

Xsoft

Question/Comment:

In the Tax and Bill to CAMA Integration Test Area, for Test 1, it is our impression that the county assessor is the "source" of property location address. As such, changes to the property location address data within a county should occur in the CAMA database and be passed to the Auditor in the PARCEL file for real property, PERSPROP file for personal property, and MOBILE file for annually assessed mobile homes. Typically the Mailing Address is controlled by the Auditor and sent to the Assessor via Tax-to-CAMA.

Answer:

The Department has revised the wording of Test 1 to ask for a change in the mailing address rather than a property location address. This revision is reflected in the finalized version of the Phase II testing scenarios, which is posted to the Phase II Vendor Certification webpage.

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates, Thomson Reuters

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

In the Tax and Bill to CAMA Integration Test Area, for Test 2, when splits and transfers of ownership are provided through the TAX to CAMA file, they are processed as two distinct transactions. First the split must be processed to create the new child parcels and then the transfer of ownership is processed to create the new owners of record. In each case the user does have the ability to make changes prior to processing, however the split must occur first since you cannot change the ownership of a record until that record exists.

Answer:

The Department is amenable to a vendor demonstrating this functionality over the course of a couple of iterations if their system requires more than one iteration for a split in a parcel to occur and the name and address information of the new parcel be updated.

From

Xsoft

Question/Comment:

In the Tax and Bill to CAMA Integration Test Area, for Test 4, you are requiring changes in the values that originated in the tax and billing system to integrate into the CAMA system. The issue here is that the Auditor is not responsible for the valuation of property. The Assessor is always responsible for the valuation of property and is the "source" of valuation information. In turn, there should never be a scenario where the Auditor integrates value changes with the Assessor (i.e., TAX to CAMA), rather it should always be the case that the Assessor integrates value changes with the Auditor (i.e., CAMA to TAX).

Answer:

The Department understands that currently a change to the valuation of a property may technically start in the assessor's office when an assessing official initiates the paperwork for a change to the assessed valuation for a property; however, the actual data entry often does not occur in the CAMA system in the current tax year.

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates, Thomson Reuters

Question/Comment:

In the Tax and Bill to CAMA Integration Test Area, for Test 5, the standard practice for allocation of the 1% in the CAMA system has been that users are instructed to assign any potentially eligible land and building record as 1%. If the homestead deduction is filed and approved in the Auditor's office, when the values are rolled from CAMA to TAX, the TAX system's have been running a check to make sure that any homestead eligible properties have 1% values in the roll file.

Answer:

The assessor will continue to allocate any potential land and improvements eligible for 1% in this manner. Upon importation, the tax and billing software will continue to roll values with a homestead to the appropriate bucket. This process is unchanged by the scenarios and is also described in Test Area 1(e).

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

The assessor does not have to care about homestead eligibility, and shouldn't since it is an Auditor function. Forcing the Auditor to pass homestead deduction information unnecessarily complicates the process. Furthermore, given that the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Test Area requires a reporting mechanism for the discovery of active homestead parcels without a current allocation distribution to the 1% classification group, this requirement introduces an unnecessary redundancy to the system.

Answer:

The Department disagrees with the vendor comment. With the constitutional property tax caps, the assessor needs to be more aware of homestead status as it determines value allocations. This test represents a continuation of what CAMA vendors are required to demonstrate in Phase I testing per the requirements of 50 IAC 26-13-5.

From

L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comment:

In the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Test Area, for Test 1, we feel that this test should read slightly differently. Rather than being a file passed from the Auditor to the Assessor (TAX to CAMA), this should be done using a file passed from the Assessor to the Auditor (CAMA to TAX). The reason for this is simple, the CAMA system is already required to create and provide the PARCEL file to the auditor, which contains all of the information that is required under this test. Requiring a new and separate file from TAX to CAMA unnecessarily complicates that process. Additionally, the current wording of this test is in direct conflict with how vendors were directed to accomplish this task in 50 IAC 23 by the DLGF.

Answer:

The Department has revised the wording of this test to ask that the tax and billing system integrate a file from the CAMA system and generate a report that shows the inconsistencies between the two systems. This revision is reflected in the finalized version of the Phase II testing scenarios, which is posted to the Phase II Vendor Certification webpage.

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates, GUTS

Question/Comment:

In the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Test Area, for Test 1, similar to tests 1(b), 2(a), and 3(a) in the Tax and Billing to CAMA Integration Test Area, compliance with this test is wholly dependent upon the type of integration environment employed in a specific jurisdiction, real-time or file-based. In a real-time environment, changes flow between systems seamlessly and the data is essentially shared. Because the data that is subject to this test is shared, there could be no expectation that there are mismatches related to inventory, names, or addresses. For real-time environments, we would recommend that this test be deemed inapplicable.

Answer:

Regardless of whether the property tax management system is entirely integrated or involves a batch file process to integrate changes that are made in one module into the other modules of the system, a report identifying potential inconsistencies is still required per the user-defined reporting capabilities under system and integration demonstration in 50 IAC 26-18-3.

From

Thomson Reuters

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

In the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Test Area, for Test 2, the standard practice for allocation of the 1% in the CAMA system has been that users are instructed to assign any potentially eligible land and building record as 1%. If the homestead deduction is filed and approved in the Auditor's office, when the values are rolled from CAMA to TAX, the TAX system's have been running a check to make sure that any homestead eligible properties have 1% values in the roll file. This is done by the tax & billing System as an edit in the Annual AV roll process and must be resolved before the "roll" (again at least on our system). Calculation edits and generating a warning when manually flagging a property as Homestead eligible and will also produce an error, which must be corrected at before calculation if any of these exist. As such, the assessor does not have to care about homestead eligibility, and shouldn't since it is an auditor's function. Forcing the auditor to pass homestead deduction information unnecessarily complicates the process.

Answer:

This test represents a continuation of what CAMA vendors are required to demonstrate in Phase I testing per the requirements of 50 IAC 26-13-5. Namely, the CAMA system must indicate which parcels are homestead eligible and ensure that those properties that are eligible for a homestead deduction contain at least a portion of their assessed value in the one percent bucket. Both CAMA and tax and billing vendors are expected to demonstrate that their systems can generate this user-defined report upon completion of the tests in the Integration section of the Phase II testing scenarios.

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates

Question/Comment:

In the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Area 1, for Test 4, we feel that this test should read slightly differently. Rather than being a report generated from the CAMA system, this should be done from the TAX system. The reason for this is simple, the CAMA system is already required to create the PARCEL file and provide to the Auditor. This file can be created and provided to the Auditor at any time and the Auditor could run the comparison of values report (rather than the assessor). Currently the Assessor/CAMA have no idea what values the Auditor has in TAX; requiring a new and separate file from TAX to CAMA unnecessarily complicates the process. Additionally, the current wording of this test is in direct conflict with how vendors were directed to accomplish this task in 50 IAC 23 by the DLGF.

Answer:

The Department has revised the wording of this test to ask that the tax and billing system can generate a report that shows the differences in current values between the two systems. This revision is reflected in the finalized version of the Phase II testing scenarios, which is posted to the Phase II Vendor Certification webpage.

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates, GUTS

Question/Comment:

In the Reporting Capabilities in the Property Tax Management System Test Area, for Test 4, additional clarification is requested relative to the subject PARCEL file. Is this specifically a reference to the PARCEL file data that was provided for a particular value interface (roll) or the values contained in a PARCEL file be it created today? Furthermore, would the comparison be drawn to that data in T & B that was originally interfaced, or would it be to the current value in the T & B system after necessary adjustments as discussed in the CAMA to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area?

Answer:

The report generated is looking at the most current values in the CAMA system and the most current values in the tax and billing system. Under the revision in the wording, this test assumes that the real property assessment files would reflect the most current values in the CAMA system.

From

Thomson Reuters

Question/Comments and Answers

Question/Comment:

From

Thomson Reuters

In the Creation and Exporting of Files Test Area, for Test 1, Phase 1 testing relative to 50 IAC 23 required that only verified and validated sales disclosure data (SALEDISC, SALECONTAC, SALEPARCEL) was to be exported when required. Should this test be construed as a departure from that constraint; now requiring that all data regardless of quality verification and validity confirmation be exported and subsequently relied upon?

Answer:

The parameters for file extraction from the sale disclosure system have not changed. The data extract still requires that all sales records must be verified and validated.

Question/Comment:

From

Xsoft, L.L. Low Associates

In the Creation and Exporting of Files Test Area, for Test 2, we feel that this test should read slightly differently. Rather than being a file passed from the Auditor to the Assessor (TAX to CAMA), this should be done using a file passed from the Assessor to the Auditor (CAMA to TAX). The reason for this is simple, the CAMA system is already required to create and provide the PARCEL file to the auditor, which contains all of the information that is required under this test. Requiring a new and separate file from TAX to CAMA unnecessarily complicates that process. Additionally, the current wording of this test is in direct conflict with how vendors were directed to accomplish this task in 50 IAC 23 by the DLGF.

Answer:

The Department has revised the wording of this test to ask that the CAMA system can generate an extract with the requested information for upload into the tax and billing system. This revision is reflected in the finalized version of the Phase II testing scenarios, which is posted to the Phase II Vendor Certification webpage.

Question/Comment:

From

L.L. Low Associates

In the Creation and Exporting of Files Test Area, for Test 3, there is no mention of Mobile Home or Personal Supplemental files. Even though these are vendor developed files they should be included as they are required to complete certain test scenarios. There is no mention of RailAV or UtilityAV files. There is no mention of Tax-to-CAMA files. Even though this is a vendor developed file it should be included as they are required to complete certain test scenarios.

Answer:

This test is asking the various systems of the property tax management systems to generate and export the files as required under 50 IAC 26-20. The property tax management system is not required to export the RAILAV or UTILITYAV files or any supplemental files that may be used in the interface or integration of data between the assessment system and tax and billing system.

Question/Comment:

Added May 1, 2013

From

Thomson Reuters

In the Oil and Gas to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, the tax and billing system does not utilize certain fields from the OILGAS and OILGASALL files, like the Interest Type (W/R) and the Oil and Gas Allocation Interest Factor fields. As this particular information is not used by authorized users of the tax and billing system, is it permissible to exclude the information during the roll of gross assessed values from the oil and gas assessment system to the tax and billing system?

Answer:

The Department is mindful that certain fields contained in the data extract files from the assessment system may not be utilized by the tax and billing system to perform required functions as referenced in 50 IAC 26. To the extent that the tax and billing vendor may not need certain fields from assessment systems' extract files (e.g., OILGAS and OILGASALL) in order to meet the software standards, they may choose not to interface these data into the tax and billing system.

Question/Comments and Answers

From

Question/Comment:

Added May 1, 2013

Thomson Reuters

In the Test Area 4: Oil and Gas to Tax and Billing Interface, we noticed that the Property Number field for the OILGASALL file from the Department provided data bundle contains records that are not 18 digits in length. This may pose an issue for testing. Our system has a programming business rule that since the oil and gas property is assessed as real property, it must be 18 digits, following the standard numbering system of other real property records. It does not allow users or an import process to create a record with less than 18 digit parcel number. In the test it would process the records and they would all come up on an exception report that the records do not conform to the property numbering system. If that is acceptable then we are ok.

Answer:

Oil and gas interests are assessed as real property. In 50 IAC 26-8-2, however, the property numbering system for oil and gas is grouped under the same category as the numbering system for personal property. This is why the Property Number field in the OILGASALL file in the data bundle includes 12 digits, which more closely aligns to the typical personal property number format, instead of 18 digits, which follows the real property number format. The only requirements in 50 IAC 26-8-2 are that 1) the first two digits must represent the county, 2) the property number be unique within the county, and 3) the number is carried forward into future years. For the purposes of certification testing, the Property Number field in the OILGASALL file in the data bundle will remain in its current 12-digit format. Since 50 IAC 26 does not require that oil and gas property numbers follow the same numbering convention as real property records, the tax and billing system should be able to process/interface an oil or gas property record with a property number that is less than 18 digits, as long as it follows the requirements spelled out in 50 IAC 26-8-2. For example, if MVP were to become the newly selected tax and billing system for a county where oil and gas property numbers followed a numbering convention with something less than 18 digits, MVP should be still be able to process these records under the numbering convention used by that county, assuming that the numbering convention follows the parameters in 50 IAC 26-8-2. Specific to the exception report you referenced, if this report only serves as a notice that the records do not follow MVP's standard numbering system for oil and gas property numbers, we don't see the exception report as being problematic necessarily as long as the records are still interfaced correctly from the oil and gas assessment system.

From

Question/Comment:

Added May 1, 2013

Thomson Reuters

In the Section B: Integration portion of the integration testing, where the vendors are asked to create and run required integration files that will take data and integrate it with the other systems of the property tax management system, is the DLGF going to designate what file layout the data elements need to be in?

Answer:

The Department will not designate a file layout for the integration files in Phase II that take data from the tax and billing system to the CAMA system or from the sales disclosure system to the CAMA system. The layout of the individual integration files may vary possibly from vendor to vendor. The primary objective is to ensure that the CAMA system can maintain and access – as a separate field/posting - both the current AV and allocations of property records as reflected in the tax and billing system.

From

Question/Comment:

Added July 1, 2013

L.L. Low Associates

In the Personal Property to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, we have a couple of questions regarding the PERSPROP file and NAICS codes:

1. Is the NAICS field (or Principle Business Activity Code) a required field that the county assessor must provide a valid value in the PERSPROP file?

A. IF they do provide a code, but it is not valid we will generate an error and the county assessor would need to fix before the file could be processed (meaning the county assessor would make the correction and generate a new PERSPROP file)

B. IF they do NOT provide a code (i.e. blank field) we think that should be a warning (vs. an error) so they can either fix it or not. If they choose not to fix the blank then we will update it as a "blank". Our questions stem from two things; one, the file format does not appear to indicate this is a required field, and two; that this code comes from the form that the taxpayer is filling out and we believe they often could leave this field blank when they return their form because they really have no clue about the codes.

2. Do you agree with this methodology?

Answer:

The Principle Business Activity Code field is a required field in the PERSPROP file and is included in our compliance checks that we run on a

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county's PERSPROP file submission. The process that you have outlined seems like a workable solution and helpful method to ensure that valid NAICS codes are being used by the county assessor. However, we should note that the Department is not planning to test tax and billing vendors for a specific check of whether the system generates an error or warning for an invalid or null NAICS code as part of the interface process during the upcoming certification testing.

Question/Comment:	Added July 1, 2013	From Thomson Reuters, Hamilton County/Compuntronix
<p>In the Mobile to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, during an actual "real world" interface of personal property annually assessed mobile home data, tax and billing vendors have traditionally been using a supplemental file that contains extra data fields not included in the MOBILE file specs per 50 IAC 26. This supplemental file is the result of dialogue between assessment and tax and billing vendors to help determine what data elements are needed in the tax and billing system to calculate and generate a tax statement for such records. Is the DLGF going to designate what file layout the data elements need to be in a MOBILE supplemental file used during this interface test area?</p>		

Answer:

The Department would like to highlight the following points:

- In the MOBILE to tax and billing interface test in Phase II, the assessment vendor will have to generate the MOBILE file per the file specifications in 50 IAC 26-20 using the data that are provided in the corresponding file in the data bundle. Tax and billing vendors will have to show that they can take the data contained in the MOBILE file and interface the data into their systems.
- Based on feedback received previously from vendors, the Department has also provided a supplemental MOBILE file that contains additional information outside the 50 IAC 26 file specifications and that vendors may use during the interface test of MOBILE data to the tax and billing system. However, since the supplemental MOBILE file contains information outside the scope of the file specifications in 50 IAC 26, the Department cannot require that the assessment system produce a supplemental file or that the tax and billing vendor import the data from said file.
- The Department will leave the technical programming of the interfacing of the data contained in the MOBILE file to the discretion of the vendors and will not prescribe one set standard file format for conducting the interface. This applies to the other interface tests (i.e., PARCEL, PERSPROP, OILGAS/OILGASALL) for Phase II testing, as well.

Elaborating on the third point, since the Department is leaving the technical programming of the interface files to the discretion of the vendors, the Department is all right with the vendors engaging in dialogue with one another and attempting to arrive at a consensus on the format for the interface file(s) prior to the start of certification testing. Ultimately, it may not be possible to arrive at just one mutually agreed upon set of interface files for every assessment-tax and billing system combination to use. There could indeed end up being one set of interface files for one assessment-tax and billing system combination and a different set of interface files for another assessment-tax and billing system combination. Still, vendors are welcome to engage in this dialogue in order to achieve some sort of consensus. Ultimately (and within the given time frame of the certification testing window), each assessment-tax and billing system vendor pairing will have to achieve an agreed upon interface file format in order to demonstrate the tests in the interface portion of Phase II testing - whether it be the one universally agreed upon interface file format used by every assessment-tax and billing system pairing or an interface file format that is unique to that particular assessment-tax and billing system vendor pairing.

Finally, one point that we would like to emphasize is that vendors should not be discouraged from setting up a time to come in for Phase I testing even if all the details (e.g., interface file formatting) for Phase II are not completely ironed out. The individual stand alone functionality of each assessment and tax and billing system is what the Department is testing in Phase I. If a tax and billing vendor has created its own interface process for importing the data contained in the PARCEL, PERSPROP, MOBILE, UTILITYAV, and RAILAV files as provided in the data bundle and is ready to come in for Phase I testing, they should proceed to schedule a time for Phase I testing even if there is still ongoing discussions with assessment vendors on how the format for the interface files may look during Phase II testing. The Department evaluators will be focused on the ability for the tax and billing system to import the data contained in the files correctly rather than the layout or format of the interface files themselves.

Question/Comment:	Added September 3, 2013	From L.L. Low Associates
<p>In the Oil and Gas to Tax and Billing Interface Test Area, referencing an earlier question and Departmental response on the same interface test area (as shown on Page 4 of this document), we have been using an alternate file format (OILGASALT), developed by XSoft and used by other CAMA vendors as well, due to the deficiencies in the original 50 IAC 23 OILGAS file formats and - as far as we know - is being used throughout the state. The alternate file (OILGASALT) has now been used successfully to interface Oil & Gas AV's for several years now. When we test for Phase II, should we expect that the OILGASALT file to be an acceptable interface file on its own?</p>		

Answer:

Reiterating a key point from the Department's response to several similar questions on the OILGAS interface, the Department evaluators will be less focused on the layout/format of the actual interface files themselves compared to 1) verifying that the oil and gas module can generate and extract the OILGAS and OILGASALL files per the specifications of 50 IAC 26-20-7, as well as a roll report that reflects the gross assessed values that are being

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interfaced, and 2) verifying that the tax and billing system can correctly interface the necessary data elements to demonstrate the applicable tests in Test Area 4: Oil and Gas to Tax and Billing Interface in the Phase II testing scenarios. Since the administrative rule – 50 IAC 26 – does not elaborate on the fine detail of the interface files between assessment and tax and billing systems, the Department will not certify one standard layout or format of these interface files; rather, the Department will defer to the judgment of the various assessment-tax and billing vendor pairings to determine the layout of the interface files for each applicable pairing – whether that results in one universal layout/format for all pairings to use or in several different layouts/formats.

Assuming that the OILGASALT interface file (referenced above) allows for vendors to demonstrate the applicable tests in Phase II, the Department is not opposed to this interface file being used during testing. Again, though, the Department will not be certifying the actual OILGASALT interface file itself.